DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JUNE 1940

VOL 1 No 6 PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1 THREEPENCE

1 NOTES OF THE MONTH

3 THE FACTS OF THE CASE
An editorial survey of the purpose of Documentary

5 ECONOMICS ON THE SCREEN

7 NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

9 TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH
Pastor Hall *and* The Story of Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet

10 INDIA AND THE WAR: Psychology of Public Opinion

13 THE "UNUSUAL" FILM MOVEMENT

14 FILM SOCIETY NEWS
Scottish Amateur Film Festival
Programme Building

15 THREE NEW FRENCH FILMS

16 NEWS THEATRES IN WAR-TIME

16 DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR JUNE

17 BRITISH DOCUMENTARY ACTIVITY

17 BOOK REVIEWS

17 CORRESPONDENCE

18 FILM LIBRARIES

Late Again

IT IS TO be regretted that, at the time of going to press, the public has still not had the opportunity of seeing the Ministry of Information's *Squadron* 992, and that there is no news of its early release. The film was shown to the French Minister of Information and a large invited audience as long ago as April 2nd, when it was enthusiastically received. At the time of its completion, it would have been an important contribution to the maintenance of public confidence in the defence of Britain. Today, though the fine qualities of Watt's direction retain their validity and the film remains a splendid description of the life and work of the balloon barrage men, it has lost the gripping topicality which it derived from being based on the Forth Bridge raid. And what of the effect on the technicians who worked night and day to finish the film only to find that their urgent efforts are not matched by the efforts of those responsible for getting the film shown?

The Films Division has yet to shake itself out of the stately but slow methods of the peace-time civil service and to gear itself to the minute-to-minute urgencies of war. In peace, two months is just two months; in war it may be a lifetime. The new Minister, the Rt. Hon. Alfred Duff Cooper, is a man of action. Let us hope that he will narrow the gap between the planning of a policy and its execution.

Film Makers and War Service

THE ASSOCIATION OF REALIST FILM PRODUCERS reports that, after many weeks' negotiation, they have received from the Ministry of Labour and National Service a new decision regulating the calling up for military service of documentary film makers. The Schedule of Reserved Occupations originally listed only cameramen and editors over 30 as being not available for military service. This reservation was incapable by itself of ensuring the maintenance of units qualified to produce progaganda films during the war, and the Ministry has now

amended the Schedule of Reserved Occupations to include documentary producers, directors and assistant directors at the age of 30. The new decision by no means solves the problem. The average age of the 55 members of the Association of Realist Film Producers—which represents a large majority of documentary film-makers in Great Britain—is only 28. It will be necessary to apply for special postponement of call-up in the case of many documentary workers under 30 who are wanted for work on officially sponsored films.

In the case of younger documentary people passing into military service, it is to be hoped that their particular abilities and training will be used to the best advantage (as in the case of workers in many other trades). It is possible that a private's routine job in the Army Pay Corps (a case in point) is not the most suitable for a documentary film director with four good propaganda films to his name. We still await news of the formation of properly-organised production units within the British armed forces. It is reported that the French have already nearly a thousand film technicians recording, observing and reporting the war.

Empire Film Week

THE INAUGURATION of Empire Film Week at the Tatler Cinema (London) in the middle of May was an enterprising and intelligent move on the part of Donald Taylor, of Strand Films. The four productions shown were impressive both in the scope of their subject matter and in their basic value as regards the enlightenment of the ordinary citizen. The programme, because it was balanced and integrated, made it plainer than ever that planning is a vital, and far too neglected factor in our present use of films. A number of films grouped under a generic subject-heading will in general have a better market in the commercial cinemas and a wider effect in their non-theatrical use than single and sporadic productions, however well-made. The distinction, in fact, is between directive, well-planned propaganda and instructional work and the *laisser-faire* attitude which vaguely hopes that individual commercial enterprise will some time or other coincide with national needs. It is to be hoped that the Films Division of the Ministry of Information has carefully noted this practical example of the directive possibilities of the film.

A New Plan for Distribution

IT IS UNDERSTOOD that the group programme on the Empire, referred to in the preceding paragraph, will form the first of a series which are to be distributed on the basis of a new scheme evolved by Donald Taylor. Firstly, the real value of group programmes to Newsreel and Specialised theatres is to be fully exploited. Secondly, there is the possibility of arranged special matinées in a large number of cinemas which do not open in the afternoon for their normal programmes. Thirdly, there may well be cases when exhibitors would book a group programme of shorts as a second feature. Enterprise of this sort points the way not merely to a partial solution of the problem of a satisfactory return from shorts distribution; it is also a reproof to certain official bodies whose duties and responsibilities should—but also do not—include the initiation of new schemes. Planning and action are both needed. At present there is little sign of either in official quarters.

Reciprocity Achieved

AN INTERCHANGE of documentary and studio film personnel has always appeared likely to yield greater realism in the story film, and to bring to documentary a more polished technique in the handling of those elements of personal drama which are appropriate to many subjects. Yet, before the war, there were few instances of creative workers moving from one field into the other. During recent months the need for an increased use of realistic subject-matter and methods in British films has resulted in two important transfers. The fact that David Macdonald, director of *This Man is News* and *This Man in Paris*, has been making a Ministry of Information documentary for the G.P.O. Film Unit has already been reported in DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER. Now there follows news that Alberto Cavalcanti, the G.P.O. Film Unit's producer, has been released to make *John and Marianne*, a feature-length story of the Cornish and Breton fisherfolk. Michael Balcon at A.T.P. Studios is responsible for the project. The long-standing bonds and rivalries of the fishing communities of Britain and France represent, at the present time, a brilliant choice of story material. Makers of documentary will feel that the producer of *North Sea* and *Squadron* 992 is an ideal choice to carry the torch of realism amongst the lath and plaster.

Documentary Biography

LLOYD GEORGE was, we believe, the first politician to have a film made of his life in his own lifetime. (We knew the actor who doubled for him; the poor fellow's now dead.) The film of Mahatma Gandhi just being completed in India, however, is a new kind of film biography, and the saint-leader not only never sees films himself but is said to have been unaware of the existence of Mr Charles Chaplin until he met him in London. Two years ago Mr A. K. Chettiar, head of Documentary Films Ltd. (Madras), who did newsreel work for Pathé in the United States, conceived this unique project. He travelled 100,000 miles and bought up 50,000 feet of newsreel material featuring the Mahatma, including scenes of his life in London when he attended the Indian Round Table Conference. The film apparently sets out to be more than a record of Mr Gandhi's life, by showing the institutions and movements started by him. Its length for India will be 12,000 feet, in three separate languages, and Lowell Thomas is commenting an American 3,000 feet version. No report is yet to be had of an English version.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Owing to rises in cost of postage and paper we are forced to increase the price of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER to 4d. beginning with the next issue. The new subscription rate in Great Britain is now 2/- for six months, including postage. This does not affect subscriptions taken out before June 1st.

THE FACTS OF THE CASE

An editorial survey of the purpose of Documentary

IN THE LAST issue of this News Letter an article was published entitled "Should Documentary go Theatrical?" The views of the writer (who answered the question with an emphatic negative) did not by any means coincide with the views of the Editorial Board. But the article was of value in that it allowed an expert to blow not only the non-theatrical trumpet but also the gaff. He brought out categorically and blatantly the main features of a totally artificial rift which some persons have lately tried to descry in the main field of documentary policy. For as soon as anyone comes out exclusively for "theatrical" on the one hand or "non-theatrical" on the other, the falsity of the case becomes only too apparent. To argue that *Pasteur* or *Zola* or *Ehrlich* do not represent "Hollywood gone documentary" is to beg the question. No one in their senses would pretend they did anything of the sort. But those very films do represent—within the strictest terms of maximum box-office receipts—the same sort of things with which documentary-makers agree. The Warner Brothers' films may perhaps concede too much to popular taste—even to points of factual inaccuracy. But their basic effect is to bring before the general public an awareness of the vital importance to us all of the great scientist or the great reformer. They remind us that in our world jobs are to be done which demand the utmost sincerity, single-mindedness and self-sacrifice. At their best, they remind us sharply of our own lack of responsibility to the State of which we are members.

It is easy, too, to claim that the primary interest of documentary is not drama, or poetry, or a new film technique, but rather education. Such statements are not uncommon, but they are, in the end, rather like those clever mathematical tricks which prove that 2 plus 2 equals five; very convincing, but based on a cunningly concealed false premise. Here the false premise is summed up in claims such as "a capitulation to entertainment value is fatal". This sort of remark means nothing at all to documentary except perhaps that its workers should not produce sugar-coated musicals or society comedies. In other words, a solemn warning against the one thing documentary workers could not do, without giving up the whole basis of their creed. Such a thesis really argues complete misunderstanding of the real meaning of the documentary movement; by suggesting an impossible *débâcle* it paves the way for that very type of untutored criticism which the less stable elements in the sociological field sometimes direct against this new and vital approach to human affairs. It is a mistake to claim that documentary makers are interested in "educational theory first and film production second", or that it is an "accident" that they have chosen the medium of cinema. Nor is the reverse the case. The fact is that documentary films have been successful because they represent an interweaving of technical experiment with educational approach.

It is in fact time to restate, without equivocation, that the basis of the documentary approach to films (we have no space to consider other fields) lies in the dramatic and vivifying power of cinema. The old phrase "bringing alive" still serves its purpose, for that, *par excellence*, is what the documentary film can do. Into the valley of dead bones, of bones dried by the monsoons of vapidity in leisure life on the one hand, and by the siroccos of a hidebound classroom system on the other, it can breathe a new and powerful life. If it is basically an educational movement, that is because today the word "education" must serve a wider field than that which the word usually connotes. Education today means the inculcation of a sense of citizenship, a sense of position in the international scheme, and a sense of responsibility, no less than a sense of academic accomplishment or civic wonder. The 1939 review of the Rockefeller Foundation* contains, under the heading of "Social Sciences", several excellent passages to this effect. For instance:—

> "We have created a society so interdependent that issues are no longer simple, individual and local; they are complex, social and world wide. And they are beyond the experience of most of us. Money and credit, fiscal policy, international relations, international trade and finance, national income and its distribution, wages, profits, prices, monopoly, purchasing power, savings and investment, employment and unemployment, social security, collective bargaining, housing, public opinion, propaganda, public administration, the relations between government and business, individual and social adjustment, crime, social welfare, education, population, and social justice in an interdependent society—here is merely a brief list of some of the urgent issues. How can tanks and bayonets hope to solve such problems as these?"

This is, of course, an American point of view, and one which in our present stresses we may find hard to balance correctly; but in considering the basic outlook of documentary we are bound to recognise that all its work springs from some such thesis. The report goes on to point out that:—

> "The simple techniques and methods of yesterday will not suffice. Highly specialised and complex methods are necessary. Methods as intricate and varied as the problems themselves must be developed and employed by highly skilled men and women working under the most favourable conditions."

It is hardly too much to claim that the makers of documentary films have pressed for the adoption of an exactly similar attitude over the past ten years, and that they have found the answer to their demands not merely in Government Departments but also in the public relations field as represented by the more enlightened public utility corporations. This

* The Rockefeller Foundation. A review for 1939, by Raymond B. Fosdick. Published by the Rockefeller Foundation, New York City, U.S.A.

in itself is witness to the realisation, even by the world of commerce, that something more than cash and credit is needed to resolve the dangerous complex of modern civilisation. But this realisation has been achieved, not by mobilising under any box-office or non-box-office banner. It has been achieved, in the end, by concentrating on the necessity for making available to all classes of every population a wider and more vital vision of the needs and implications of the complicated world into which the average citizen is born, and which it is his part, to however small an extent, collectively or individually, to make or mar. Documentary, by opening windows on to the world, seeks to enlist the active good-will, or if you prefer to reverse it, the will to constructive action, of every human being in the complex of modern civilisation. That is the object; and if in the process sociologists, poets, and dramatists are thrown up, that is nothing to complain of on the part of non-theatrical experts; they are simply confusing ends and means.

The strain of war puts documentary policy to a bitter test. The "theatrical versus non-theatrical" controversy is possibly a symptom of that test. And nothing could prove more effectively than present circumstances the pointlessness of such hard-and-fast distinctions. For we are fighting a total war; and if cinema is to be used at all it must be fully mobilised in all the fields in which it is of value. Theatrical or non-theatrical, its value—who dare deny it?—is fully proved.

A slightly more detailed study will confirm this. Films can carry a true message and a vital message to audiences in the public cinemas. These audiences—which include yourselves and ourselves—often take trash; but that is not to say that they never take the opposite of trash. Apart from *Zolas* and *Citadels* and *Ehrlichs*, cinema audiences have time and time again given the lie to those exhibitors and renters who have claimed that documentary is not "box-office" in their own special sense. It is only necessary to mention such films as *Industrial Britain*, *Night Mail*, *Cover to Cover*, *North Sea*, *The Future's in the Air*, G.B.I.'s *Secrets of Life* and Strand's *Zoo* Series. This field is ripe for wider and wider development, and if it opens up a new era of production in the commercial film studios of this country, this too must be counted unto it for good.

But it must be remembered that to say that a film in the public cinemas is box-office is the same as saying that it has audience appeal. And audience appeal is something without which documentary films of any type must fail completely. There must be films with an equal audience appeal to people outside the cinemas—to the people gathered in schools and universities, in clubs and village institutes, in scientific conferences and international exhibitions, in get-together groups of every sort and kind. That is why an artificial distinction between "theatrical" and "non-theatrical" is so dangerous. The issue is not so cut-and-dried. For we are faced with infinite gradations of audience appeal; from the purely theatrical, to the film which is good for all generalised get-together groups, to the film which is good for specialised but not acutely technical citizens, to the film which is good for scientists, sociologists or economists in smaller and more highly specialised groups. The common denominator is audience appeal. Every group, from the audience at the Odeon to the twelve biologists in a laboratory, demands a certain standard of presentation. At one end there may be teaching films or "interest" films, and, at the other, films which set high standards of form, of suspense value, of dramatisation, of æsthetics; but basically success is always determined by audience appeal. In each and every category the measuring-stick of purpose is the same; does each film bring enlightenment, and the possibility of constructive results and action, to the audiences for which it is designed?

A booklet has just been issued by the Association for Education in Citizenship* which gives welcome evidence of the realisation by public-spirited persons of the necessity for preserving a sense not merely of continuity but of ultimate purpose in our war-torn world. In a foreword Mr Kenneth Lindsay (lately Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education) says:—

> "A notable advance in training for citizenship would be achieved if, in addition, efforts were made to meet the genuine thirst for further education by means of informal lectures, talks, discussion groups, and debates. We have yet to discover in democratic countries a reliable technique for introducing our younger citizens to the modern world. They understand the value of the film and the poster and the radio: can we not enlist these and many other aids, such as Exhibitions, Surveys, and Civic Weeks, to make citizenship in a democracy a challenging business?"

The booklet goes on to outline various means of narrowing the gulf between the individual and the community, and in speaking of the film it points out that:—

> "The film has a special, some would say unique, power of presenting facts and ideas about the larger world that lies outside our daily world, but on which it depends. Documentary films deal with the present world, its problems, and their human side. They aim at dealing with these subjects in an imaginative manner, and by doing so to create an interest in man at his work, and an awareness of social problems. . . . If the film is good it cannot fail to arouse interest and to stimulate imagination. It should also have put the audience in possession of the basis of information on the subject or have created a proper social sentiment about it. But in the hands of a good teacher or leader the film should do more than this: it should serve to start discussion, further research, and projects."

No one can disagree with these sentiments. Appearing as they do in time of war, they are heartening evidence of the determination to keep ultimate issues well in mind. But, *pace* the non-theatrical experts, they are quite the reverse of a narrow approach to the use of films. They point, on the contrary, to the necessity for an ever-widening approach. The documentary technique cannot be angled into any special corner, however seductively cushioned. It reserves the right to invade the theatres, from Leicester Square to Mousehole, from New York to Patagonia. It also reserves the right to invade the classroom, the town hall, the shop, the school, the university, the Army hut, the church, the hospital, the laboratory, and the home. It not merely reserves the right; it demands it.

That is why there is today a pressing need for the Films Division of the Ministry of Information to mobilise, far more

* Roads to Citizenship. Oxford University Press, 1940.

vigorously than hitherto, the use of films. We have already mentioned the value of documentary films in the theatres. In addition to this there are the many organisations which supply films to a wide public outside the theatres. These include, for instance, the varied libraries listed on our catalogue page; their coverage is on all counts both large and influential. The Films Division must note and cater for all these audiences if its work at home (let alone in allied and neutral countries) is to be truly effective. To quote once again from the Rockefeller Report:—

"Democracy today needs the social scientists, both inside and outside the universities. It needs to free them to think with all possible penetration, wherever that thinking may lead. New ideas about human relations and institutional adjustment should be fully, honestly and hospitably analysed. Society should be most deeply concerned not with ridiculing failures or condemning those whose findings it does not approve, but with aiding that small minority of pioneers whose work in the social studies is reaching up to new levels of scientific achievement. Such persons are to be found in universities, in government and in private life. No greater contribution to the disinterested comprehension of today's issues could be made than by affording these able men and women full opportunity to make their work genuinely effective."

Such sentiments can and must be translated into terms of war as well as terms of peace. By so doing, the actual war effort will receive a real measure of assistance; for without vivid enlightenment there may well come a secondary (but dangerous) apathy in the consciousness of people whose major efforts are bound up in a gigantic struggle against a ruthless and well-organised foe. If it is too late to talk of rival ideologies, it is by no means too late to talk of the free mind and, if the phrase can still be accepted, of the good life. Both in public cinemas and in all parts of the non-theatrical world the documentary film has a real contribution to offer. The problem is not one of whether documentary should "go theatrical". The problem is to find the maximum coverage in all fields for a medium which has so much to offer—from inspiration to information—at a time when it was never more vital to find a quick answer to every citizen who, echoing King Lear, demands:—"What's here, beside foul weather?"

ECONOMICS ON THE SCREEN

EDITORIAL NOTE: The forty minute diagrammatic film *Unemployment and Money* reviewed here by a London University Extension lecturer on economics was planned and supervised by Professor M. Polanyi, of the Economics Department of Manchester University, assisted by Professor Jewkes. First experimental sequences of the film were financed by private subscription; the present film was made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The production of the film was undertaken by G.B. Instructional, with Mary Field as producer; the diagrams were designed by R. E. Jeffryes and the animation was done by Diagram Films and Science Films. In design and animation the film is a brilliant demonstration of the skill and ability of these companies in the production of diagrammatic films.

A GREAT DEAL of credit is due to Professor M. Polanyi for his courage and imagination in pioneering in the use of films in economics teaching. This is a field with great possibilities and one which has been almost entirely neglected. It was not to be expected that the first production of this kind would immediately and triumphantly overcome all difficulties. Perhaps, the chief value of Professor Polanyi's film is that it reveals very clearly what the difficulties are going to be; and will set him and others thinking how they may be overcome.

The subject of the film is Unemployment and Money. This in itself brings out the first difficulty. This particular subject is exceptionally complicated, and exceptionally controversial. It is almost impossible to present a theoretical analysis of complicated economic sequences in a visual form without immense simplification. This simplification in its turn implies committing yourself, broadly speaking, to whole-hearted endorsement of one theory, while many are still in the field, and are upheld in highly respected quarters. The layman will certainly learn one lesson, if he follows Professor Polanyi's film attentively. He will come away convinced that unemployment is created by the (apparently quite arbitrary) policies of the banks. This is a very dangerous half-truth in a field where nobody really quite knows what the whole truth is.

But the fact is that there are probably very few propositions in economic theory which have yet reached the stage of being universally accepted by competent students as demonstrably true. The tendency of an expanding circulation to raise the general level of prices might be cited as one such proposition (and it is one that might very well be the subject of visual exposition); but there are precious few others. From many points of view it might be better to begin with something as simple and restricted as this, rather than to attempt to present the appallingly complex series of relationships involved in the connexion between monetary policy and unemployment or cycles of trade.

In the second place, variety is essential. *Unemployment and Money* opens very pleasantly with its processions of animated figures—workers going out to earn the money, and housewives going out to spend it. (Incidentally the fact that it is possible to obtain an income without working for it is tactfully ignored.

Perhaps this is an unavoidable simplification; but since it is one which is likely to arouse hostile prejudice in a large public, it would be very desirable, if in any way possible, to conform here to the known facts of experience.) Later we see very little of the workers and housewives, and concentrate almost entirely on rather monotonous geometrical symbols. The monotony (particularly the constant return to the diagram of monetary circulation) puts a severe strain on the faculty of attention. It should not be difficult to invent ways of breaking this by the introduction of rather more vivid and realistic pictures.

This brings us to the last and more fundamental issue raised by Professor Polanyi's film. Is this kind of film really the right end at which to begin the visual teaching of economics? Or do we not want something less abstract which can be treated by pictures more nearly akin to documentaries proper? There is indeed immense scope first for straightforward documentaries, dealing with such things as, say, the relief of unemployment (meeting of Courts of Referees, Unemployment Assistance officers assessing household means, Unemployment Assistance Appeal Tribunals at work); or with the actual work of the City (how many people, not directly concerned, have any mental picture of what goes on on the floor of "the House", or behind the solid walls of the Bank of England?). From this the right sequence might be to pass to a sort of half-way type of film, which would draw simple theoretical lessons, not so much from abstract diagrams, as from pictures of the daily life of the community; or which would at least build its diagrams directly out of such pictures. Some of Professor Polanyi's own lessons might indeed have gone home better if they had been interspersed with actual pictures of banks, and of their managers accepting and rejecting applications for overdrafts behind glass partitions. This would have added a touch of vividness (which is often, rightly or wrongly, the same thing as a touch of conviction), and would at the same time have relieved the strain on the attention.

In so far as *Unemployment and Money* is primarily intended for use in classes of serious students working with a teacher, some of this criticism may be beside the mark; for it expresses the views of one who saw the film straight through at a sitting. In class-work, sections would be taken one at a time, and mental congestion would be relieved by adequate incidental exposition. (But in these conditions it is arguable that the use of a diagrammatic film is actually inferior to the time-honoured method of diagrams on the blackboard constructed by the teacher, and modified by him, as he goes along, to explain problems raised by the students on the spot.) For really popular use, on the other hand, the film must be shown by itself and as it stands; and it is in this kind of work that a more concrete and realistic treatment might be more fruitful.

A MAGAZINE OF DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

FILMS. **A New Quarterly Edited by Jay Leyda 2 Dollars a Year**

Published by Kamin Publishers 15 West 56th Street New York NY

The Second Number Contains: Collaboration in Documentary by Joris Ivens: Life Goes to the Pictures by Otis Ferguson: Film Music of the Quarter by Kurt London: A Channel For Democratic Thought by Philip Sterling: Film Problems of the Quarter: Literature of the Film

FILMS **FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTION 3 DOLLARS A YEAR NO. 2 SPRING 1940**

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

[EDITORIAL NOTE: It is our policy to have documentary films reviewed by people in no way connected with the production and distribution of such films. As far as possible we arrange for them to be reviewed by an expert in the subject-matter of the films, by an expert (outside films) in the field of propaganda and education, or by someone representative of those at whom any film is particularly directed. Thus *Men of Africa* is here reviewed by an expert on colonial administration and *The Birth of a Baby* (reviewed in the last issue by a mother) is reviewed by a doctor. Unsigned reviews are written by members of the editorial board or of the documentary movement. It is our aim to reduce the number of unsigned reviews to a minimum.]

The Fourth Estate. *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Direction:* Paul Rotha. *Photography:* J. Rogers, H. Rignold, A. E. Jeakins. *Production Manager:* Pat Moyna. *Music:* Walter Leigh. 45 minutes.

By a public relations officer

HERE is a film about *The Times* as *The Times* sees itself. As such it is an unqualified success. It conveys perfectly the characteristic blend of starchy dignity, and rather self-conscious loyalty to an historic tradition.

The film borrows the paper's practice of strict anonymity, but we are introduced to screen Presences like the editor, the chief leader-writer, the dramatic critic and the night editor, all of whom play themselves with convincing poise—a fact behind which there lies no doubt a considerable achievement of manipulation on the producer's part. The film, which runs for some 45 minutes, is constructed around the process of preparing the first edition, from the afternoon conference in the Holy of Holies to the impressive moment when the great presses in the printing-room begin to run and roar. This climax is preceded and convincingly built up by a most effective quickening in the pace of the film itself. By way of drama there is the last-minute arrival of news that a new Himalayan peak has been climbed just in time for the main page and contents bills. Incidentally there must have been considerable difficulty in selecting concrete subjects which would not cause political complications or date the film too obviously, and though the best has been made of this difficult job the inevitable result is to take away some of the sense of immediacy and actuality which is the atmosphere of all good newspaper offices in real life. We are given some inside glimpses of *The Times*' widely ramified foreign news service, including Senator Vandenberg calling the Washington correspondent "Bill", and emitting a characteristic piece of isolationism. I should like him to have to listen to it, and to audience reactions of it, about 500 times in the next few months.

What is wrong with this film is what it leaves out. It was a pity to have employed a producer with Rotha's awareness of social relationships and perspectives and then not used him to present a study of the paper in its full setting—to let us perceive the wider relationship between it, and the community it sets out to inform and guide. Institutions with more experience than *The Times* of the art of projecting themselves, long ago left behind them the notion that the way to begin was to put a picture of the works in the forefront of the announcement. *The Times*, of course, knows its own business best, and it has got what it evidently wanted, expertly and often brilliantly done. You may say the criticism is not quite fair. Very well—take it as just a bit of wishful thinking—how nice it would have been if the first top-grade, full-dress film of a British newspaper could have said a little of what matters about the press as a social institution in a free society.

By a film trade journalist

TO adopt an attitude of critical detachment to such a film as this is, for a newspaperman, maybe not impossible. It is certainly complex. No practical member of the Fourth Estate surely but is absorbed in his craft, proud in his possession of the professional passport. Rotha's admirably concise and honest film is a direct and unemotional piece of reporting. It tells its story, the story of *The Times*, which in many respects is the story of British journalism, without clichés or journalese, makes a most fascinating and essential molehill out of a positive mountain of material.

The multi millions whose daily pabulum is extracted from the more vivid and perfervid columns of the *Express*, the *Herald* and the *Mail*, may ask what has *The Times* to do with modern British journalism. It has a great deal, for it is the parent and progenitor of them all. Its critical weight may be challenged, its pomposity and studied dignity considered out of tune with the modern age. Its origins and history, its pioneering on behalf of free thought and leadership, its flawless production processes, have had, and are still having direct and powerful effects upon the Fourth Estate in general.

Like its inspiration, Rotha's document is sober, dignified, and without conscious humour. It is not without either fascination, or indeed—for the professional craftsman at least—without thrill. The jaunty, bibulous, and profane newspaperman of Hollywood, and the vapid, imbecile, and ineffective imitation observed in British films, have created a certain legend in the public mind. The unsmiling and ponderous subs of *The Fourth Estate*, the weighty editorial pronunciamentoes, the crisp Scots accents of the layout man, the pedestrian slowness, so subtly combined with infallible efficiency, to be found among the comps and in the machine rooms, have here the flavour of reality. One may look in vain for even a distant aroma of "Poppins" and the "Cheese". The fans may lament the absence of a battered trilby worn in the news room. But neither the lowbrow in the ninepennies, nor the craftsman himself, surely, will fail to respond to the thrills of that diurnal race against time, that determined, placidly calm, but intensely exciting process of getting tomorrow's news written, printed, and dispatched, to the four points of the national compass. Because Rotha has told the story simply and directly, without a self-conscious camera angle or smart alecry with the scissors, the story has a more effective punch.

The film is not purely an account of a day in the life of a great newspaper. Its main aim, of course, is to build up a composite picture of the organisation behind what William Cobbett called "The bloody old *Times*", of the strands that lie far out between Printing House Square and Washington, Tibet, the House of Commons and Middleham Gallops, of the editorial and publishing machinery which makes the daily process of production and distribution possible—and impressive. In its stride it flits over a faintly historical shore, reflects the pioneering work of Delane and the John Walters, pleads, too, on behalf of the role of the daily newspaper in civilised existence. It may not represent either the spirit or the letter of the two million nett certified readers' dailies. But what it sets out to do, and succeeds in doing, is to tell concisely and accurately, in another medium, of the purpose and the processes behind the modern newspaper. And that is a story well worth the telling.

Men of Africa. *Production:* Strand Films. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Director:* Alexander Shaw. *Distribution:* Anglo-American. 25 minutes.

By an expert on colonial administration

Men of Africa is a proud answer to those who decry the work of Great Britain as trustee for the Colonial Empire. If Dr Aggrey, the famous coloured medical missionary, were alive today, he, too, would be proud to see the practical application of his philosophy which this film so admirably portrays. He said "You can play some sort of tune on the black keys and some sort of tune on the white keys, but to obtain perfect harmony you must play on the black *and* the white keys."

What a contrast to Hitler's conception of black people as "semi-apes" whom "it is a crime against civilisation to educate". The dismal failure of the Germans to colonise successfully is understood more clearly when set against the British conception as portrayed in this beautiful film. Here we see the white man placing at the disposal of his black friend all the best that his doctors, teachers and scientists can offer. Not, let it be remembered, to create black Europeans, but better black men. Several scenes, particularly agricultural, show the white man tutoring his black students in scientific methods for the preservation and increase of his crops and cattle, while others, such as an operating theatre, show black doctors and nurses in complete charge.

The African has appreciated the value of education to such a degree that his demands at present exceed our ability to satisfy them. The picture of happy children in a mission school serves to drive home the urgency of the problem.

Wisely, however, a coloured politician in the film sounds a note of warning when he says that the whole motive of progress should be directed towards the grafting of improvements upon the best aspects of native traditions. In other words, tropical Africa while under British protection, will be developed for the African who must be encouraged gradually to assume the fullest responsibilities.

To this great task, the British Government, in spite of the fact that we are engaged in a life and death struggle with Nazism, has recently decided to contribute a sum of £50,000,000 extended over a period of ten years. We doubt whether any taxpayer who is fortunate enough to see *Men of Africa* will grumble at the share of this additional financial burden which he will be called upon to bear. Personally it left me with a feeling of pride that the principles for which we are fighting this war are so amply illustrated in what was once "darkest" Africa.

The Birth of a Baby. *Production:* American Committee on Maternal Welfare. *Distribution:* National Baby Welfare Committee. 65 minutes.

By a doctor

IN the last twenty years it has become realised that the "occupational risks" of motherhood are unnecessarily high. One certain factor is economic, for childbirth illness, like tuberculosis, is largely a disease of the underfed; but even in the more prosperous groups, motherhood is accompanied by too much avoidable illness. The most important factor in prevention is skilled supervision of the mothers during the period of pregnancy. This film was made in America to encourage expectant mothers to visit their doctors for this ante-natal care.

The story of the film is of the ante-natal care and confinement of a young American wife. Her mother-in-law and her doctor, in short talks illustrated by diagrams, describe how the womb prepares to receive and nourish the fertilised ovum, and how this ovum develops during pregnancy. Advice is given on the management of the pregnancy and incidents are shown from the doctor's work to illustrate further points: he visits a woman whose serious illness could have been avoided by ante-natal care; he reproves an inconsiderate husband; and to a rich childless wife who wishes to escape maternity, he gives a sharp warning of the dangers of abortion.

The middle part of the film drags, but when the actual confinement is reached it speeds up again. After a brief shot of the arrival of the baby, there follows a thrilling close-up of the baby taking his first breaths. The film is preceded and followed by a spoken commentary on the ways in which English methods differ from American.

The most responsible medical propaganda has to face much criticism, and in dealing with reproduction, certain special potential dangers arise. These are successfully avoided in this film. A large Saturday afternoon audience of men did not find a snigger in the whole film. The instruction is very elementary and could be improved and also increased with advantage, but the general ignorance is such that many will learn from this film.

There is nothing in the film to frighten young wives from motherhood. On the other hand it is one which both individual doctors and public health authorities will be glad for them to see. As propaganda, the film loses some of its force for most of the mothers in this country as the setting is opulent and so unreal. The idea of the film is excellent and although "it could have been done much better", it is of high educative value, and should be shown throughout the country.

Ring of Steel. *Production:* British Paramount. *Distribution:* Paramount. 40 minutes.

ANYBODY who sees newsreels regularly has no difficulty in picking out from the mass of pool material the items shot by the Paramount cameramen. Their shooting is always lively, and brightened by a lot of moving camera material. Similarly the editing of Paramount News has a brisk and business-like quality of its own.

Ring of Steel is the third of Paramount's newsreel features dealing with the Services. Like *Inside Goods No.* 1, on the R.A.F., and *'Arf A Mo, Hitler*, on the Army, *Ring of Steel* presents a lively account of the Navy's work in wartime in a first-class journalistic style. Particularly striking are the scenes of the Navy in the Arctic and the section on minesweeping. You get the feeling, so rare for this type of film, that the Navy themselves would feel that it puts them before the public in fair and sympathetic terms. In other words the film has been made with some understanding of the men and their job, and it does smell of the sea. For all-in surveys of this kind G. T. Cummins' efficiency and drive is just what is needed; forty minutes would otherwise seem very long for a straight piece of reporting.

The Builders. *Production:* Workers' Film Association and Selwyn Films. *Distribution:* 16 mm. sound. Workers' Film Association. 30 minutes.

By the secretary of the Association of Cine-Technicians

THE British Trade Union Movement has made its first film—a modest effort but an excellent beginning. *The Builders* tells the story of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, its early days, its organisation, and the benefits building workers obtain through membership.

The film was shot direct on 16 mm. except for the interiors which were reduced from 35 mm. It cost £350. That's my main complaint, and that, of course, is the sponsor's and not the producers' fault. A leading member of the Trades Union Congress General Council criticised the film as not so good in quality as shorts he occasionally sees in a cinema. I told him why. The Trade Union Movement must realise when making further films that just as good print costs good money so do good films. Bearing in mind the small budget the production is most commendable.

The important point is that at last the film has taken its place in trade union propaganda. Such a production will be far more effective than organisers' speeches and general literature. The dignity of labour stands out a mile. A very impressive scene is the initiation ceremony undergone by new members. Young bricklayers are made to realise they are doing something far more than signing on the dotted line.

Improvements could have been made by voices of the actual "actors" at times instead of a continuous commentary, and the film could have dealt more intimately with the actual lives of some of the workers. The producers have something to learn from the documentary movement here. Otherwise I raise my union badge to this production. It's a miracle at the price!

I hope other Unions will follow suit. The British worker has a great deal to be proud of. Let this pride continue to be portrayed on the screen. Then we shall see, as *The Builders* shows us, much of the real history of this country. Moreover in doing so an important weapon will be used to strengthen the Trade Union Movement so that, come what may, we shall more forcibly realise our real freedom.

Dixie 1940. *Production:* March of Time (No. 13, Fifth Year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 19 minutes.

Dixie 1940 sets out to tell us the story of the southern states of the U.S.A. in nineteen minutes. At this rate the history of the world would provide subject-matter for a single normal length feature, and to find justification for the production of anything as long as *Gone with the Wind* we should need to look beyond the terrestrial universe for our material. It is comforting therefore to find that the March of Time is able, within the time-limits of *Dixie* 1940, to give us only a series of snapshots which one hopes will one day provide the synopsis for a whole group of films dealing with different aspects of life in the southern half of the United States. These aspects are represented in the present film by a scene or a pair of scenes each, so that the total effect is of a snapshot album flicked over too fast to give a clear sight of any of its pages.

This is *March of Time* at its most exasperating. Units were sent to cover a negroes' Sunday prayer meeting, a negroes' Saturday night village dance, and into an old "colonial" house where the negro retainers cringe amongst the ancient bric-a-brac as if they had never heard of Abraham Lincoln; yet of all the material that was or could have been shot, we are allowed to see only a few quick flashes. Tuskegee, the negro university, is covered rather more thoroughly, as is Martha Berry's college for the children of impoverished whites. The film has no theme—unless the controversy as to whether the South is best described as the "problem" or as the "hope" of the United States ranks as a theme. The idea crops up once or twice that the problems of the South (Big Business has to be allowed footage to imply inanely that there are none) might be solved by increasing mass purchasing power. This, in fact, at one production stage, would appear to have been the theme of the film; but though *March of Time* has made new shots of the appalling living conditions of the sharecroppers, *March of Time* arguments on their behalf have lost indignation and vigour over the years.

TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH

PASTOR HALL

I HAVE not read Ernst Toller's play, but I like to think that it is his great spirit which illuminates the film *Pastor Hall*. The story is simple, as simple as the story of *Professor Mamlock*, and in some ways very like it. There is the same altruist, intent only on fulfilling the everyday needs of human beings, no matter what their race or political beliefs. There is the same incomprehension when the doctrine of racial superiority and of blind obedience to the Fuehrer bursts with interfering hatred into his quiet village. There is the same dawn of comprehension and at first mechanical and later fully conscious opposition to this denial of human dignity. Like Mamlock, Pastor Hall invites death with a final indictment of Nazidom. Like Mamlock he speaks quietly, wisely, without malice, as Christ once wept for Jerusalem.

Of course there is the concentration camp, there is the pathological stormtroop leader, there is beating up and smashing of Jewish property, there is an over-melodramatic interlude of the girl who returns pregnant from a labour corps, there are shootings and exaggerated characters. But these incidents are not the film; and who am I to dare say they are even exaggerated? I shall chiefly remember the twists of direction which every so often made the visual a credible pulpit from which Toller's words could come searing into my brain. The old woman weeping, and the tilt down of the camera to the casket of ashes in her hands: "Erich was so tall and strong. They made him one of Captain Roehm's bodyguard." The man whose shop had been smashed because his mother's mother was Jewish, groping among the débris in the street, and answering the Pastor's offer of help with: "Thank you, Herr Pastor, there's nothing much to do now." The boy in the concentration camp, who had once got safely away to France, and had then returned to Germany: "I didn't want to believe any longer what was written in the French newspapers. It was April, the buds were beginning to come out on the trees. I got homesick." The schoolmaster telling Pastor Hall how to interpret the word love in bible classes: "Give the example of winter relief." The Commandant of the concentration camp, addressing the new prisoners: "Every bullet costs twelve pfennig, and that's just what you're worth, no more, no less". And the S.S. man pointing the moral by calling one man out of line and shooting him down where he stood.

Most of all I shall remember the words of the Pastor's last sermon, after he had escaped from the concentration camp, and had gone back to his church, in the full knowledge that he would be followed there and shot. "The text for this my last sermon to you is from St. Paul: 'Put on the whole armour of God' . . . Men have been given a voice, and that voice is meant to be used as a sword to fight against evil things. You can shut one mouth, a hundred mouths, a thousand, but the voice will be heard. Even a very little flame shines brightly in darkness. The weak will tell the weak, and they will become strong. . . ." Visually the end is tame, compared with the mighty scene of *Mamlock* on the balcony, and the stormtroopers paralysed and unable to shoot in the street beneath, but its very simplicity gave power to the words.

This then is the film *Pastor Hall*, and it is up to all those who see it to treat it honestly, and to weigh it up. Let them remember that this kind of justification is the only possible justification and let them, when they have made their decision, be sure that it is really for this that the war is being fought. Only by such heart-searchings can the peace we need become possible.

THE STORY OF DR EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLET

MID-WAY through *The Story of Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet*, the outspoken Dr Ehrlich is invited to a formal banquet. His hostess asks the famous scientist to tell her the subject of his latest researches. Dr Ehrlich answers with one shocking word which paralyses the whole company and which, in the fact of its theatrical utterance, is as significant for this generation as was Eliza Doolittle's "bloody" for our parents. Dr Ehrlich answers that he is working on a cure for syphilis.

The Story of Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet is the story of the fight against syphilis. It is the outstanding example to date of how, without reference to the politer drawing-room conventions, the range of dramatic themes has broadened to include the whole field of human achievement. The very fact that the film has been produced represents a victory in a campaign comparable in importance with the one which Paul Ehrlich fought and won. It was not enough to attack syphilis with chemicals: it had also to be dragged from the chamber of horrors and exposed to the assaults of the propagandist. In this latter fight enlightened health authorities have now been joined by the movie moguls of Hollywood.

But let there be no mistake as to motives. In making this film Warner Brothers have not been primarily concerned to make health propaganda. Their purpose has naturally been to produce entertainment, and they have been shrewd enough showmen to realise the box-office value of the dramatic conflict, man versus disease. Yet to choose this particular episode in that conflict needed courage; and to tell the story so accurately, and with as little false or distorted emotion as it is here told by director William Dieterle, required an honesty of approach which has had its reward in a film of three-fold distinction. *The Story of Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* is first-rate entertainment; it is excellent public health propaganda; thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it is a magnificently timely reminder of the existence of much that is noble in the human spirit.

Far from shirking the scientific complexities of the subject, the film elucidates them so successfully that a deeply moving sequence is one in which the slow, fluctuating progress of Paul Ehrlich and his assistants towards the discovery of "606", the compound which will cure syphilis, is recorded for us, as well as for Ehrlich, in the wavering progress of two lines on a graph. The film does not hesitate to base a dramatic situation on the scientific importance of preserving controlled conditions in testing a new drug, or upon a diagrammatic explanation of the fundamental basis of chemo-therapy. There is no attempt to gloss over the greatest handicaps of scientific research: the opposition of the stupid bureaucrat and of the time-serving sponsor who demands immediate results, are represented in bitterly ironic episodes. Throughout the film the drama is the drama of science rather than the personal drama of the scientist. The film finishes with a law-courts scene in which Paul Ehrlich defends his work against libellous attacks. Yet Dieterle has understood that we must be made to feel that it is not Ehrlich's reputation that matters but the future achievements for humanity of "606" that are at stake. Only if we understand that the discovery is more important than the discoverers, can their devotion and self-sacrifice appear credible to us.

The actors, too, must be praised for moving skilfully aside and leaving the centre of the stage for science. Edward G. Robinson, as Ehrlich, promises future battles with Paul Muni for the laurels of historical impersonation. Ruth Gordon, as Frau Ehrlich, follows her performance as Mrs Lincoln in *Spirit of the People* with a slighter part which she plays equally brilliantly. Ruth Gordon is bringing to the screen a realistic technique which opens up new possibilities of screen characterisation. Highest praise of all must be reserved for Albert Basserman as Dr Robert Koch.

Dr Ehrlich's "Magic Bullet" is the chemical bullet that kills disease germs in the blood stream. The film leaves us remembering that there are bullets of a different kind. Very skilfully, by means of an occasional undertone of topical reference, the film carries an implicit message to a warring world. Here, it says, is the Germany of the past and here in Cologne is the Koch Institute where great scientists are working for the whole human race. Among them is Paul Ehrlich, a Jew, who wants to destroy disease with chemical bullets. But because he is a Jew, and also because he believes that everything must be subordinated to the welfare of the human race, some of his contemporaries would prefer to destroy Paul Ehrlich. Long ago it was like this, long before Nazism was heard of, the spirit of Nazism could be found amongst the German people. But not in all of them. The rest were anxious to work and fight, not just for Germany but for the whole human race. They preferred Paul Ehrlich's magic bullets to bullets of steel.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY FOURPENCE

NUMBER 6 JUNE 1940

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is issued only to private subscribers and continues the policy and purpose of **World Film News** by expressing the documentary idea towards everyday living.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London,** in association with **American Film Center, New York.**

EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey
Arthur Elton
William Farr
John Grierson
Paul Rotha
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W.1 GERRARD 4253

INDIA AND THE WAR:

PSYCHOLOGY OF PUBLIC OPINION

This article by NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI was written in March, 1940

and is reprinted here by permission of "The Statesman", Calcutta

INDIA IS A vast country; it is a long way off from the scene of fighting, and till now it has not been appreciably touched by the war. Indian opinion can therefore afford to be indifferent to, or at any rate quiescent about it. Those who are in charge of war propaganda in India could not commit a greater mistake than to regard themselves as the relaying agents of the British Ministry of Information. In its home propaganda the British Ministry has a fairly homogeneous public to work upon and a fairly straight task. It has to sustain the morale of a public generally convinced of the necessity and justice of the war. In India none of these things can be taken for granted. There are a very large number of Indians who cannot see why this war should be a grim necessity and perhaps no less a number who are not at all sure about its justice. In fact, opinion in India in regard to the war ranges from extreme hostility to extreme friendliness, with a large neutral bloc in between. The gradation of Indian opinion can be put in something like the following order, the least numerous sections being placed at the ends and the most numerous at the centre: extreme hostility, hostility tempered by prudence and self-interest, hostility balanced on the fence, sceptical neutrality, passive neutrality (the central point of view), benevolent neutrality, friendliness afraid to declare itself, friendliness more open but apt to grumble at inconveniences, and unquestioning friendliness. There is, as is only to be expected, a good deal of fluidity in this grading. While it would be idle to expect the thoroughgoing hostility to soften to something more tractable and while certain elements in India will remain invariably friendly, the rest may be counted upon to be in a state of flux. They will all be responsive in greater or lesser degree to the turn of events and to management.

Different Reactions

War propaganda in India must take note of this diversity. But at the same time it must not be led by the lack of homogeneity to ignore another all-important fact. Anyone trying to make a comprehensive cross section of India opinion about the war will discover soon enough that while the emotional reactions of Indians vary widely in accordance with their attitude to the British connexion, there is a large common element in their intellectual appraisement and anticipation of the trends of the war. For reasons to be mentioned later the colour of this opinion is largely pro-German, or at any rate hypercritical of the Allies. A curious but undeniable feature of the psychological situation is that the susceptibility to the German version of affairs is almost as common among the members of those political parties which have decided unhesitatingly to stand by Great Britain in this war as among the professed adherents of the Congress.

The most striking expression of the pro-German bias, both explicit and latent, conscious and sub-conscious, is perhaps to be found in the approach to the day's news. The majority of Indians show a pronounced inhibition to news favourable to the Allies. They receive reports of Allied successes, exploits and power with mental reservation, but show themselves overready to give the Germans more than their due. For example, if a British reconnaissance plane is said to have flown over Berlin it is generally looked upon as an improbability. But if the report goes that a German plane has gone as far as Merseyside not only is the visit a certainty but Liverpool and Manchester are also laid in ruins. The *Graf Spee* affair illustrated the pro-German bent rather characteristically. It came as a severe shock to the notion of most Indians of the relative prowess of the two parties and to their calculation of the probabilities and improbabilities. For a few days Indian opinion was bewildered, if not dazed and demoralised. Then gradually it recovered its equanimity from the thought that the British people must have come to a pretty bad pass to be able to crow over a success gained by an overwhelming force over a solitary and small German ship.

A more extreme and less common illustration of the same mental state came within the writer's experience in connexion with the sinking of the *Athenia*. As soon as the news of the sinking was published in India, an educated Indian recently back from England remarked that it must have been done by the English in order to embroil the United States with Germany. This was said without outside prompting, when, in fact, even the German explanation had not gone further than

suggesting that the *Athenia* had accidentally struck a British mine.

Almost invariably this bias leads Indians to anticipate events just as the Germans would or as the Germans would like others to. Generally speaking, people here were unshakeable in the conviction that there was not going to be any war last September; next, most of them expected that after the defeat and conquest of Poland it was going to end; many now believe that the war will develop less as an Anti-German, than as an anti-Communist crusade against Russia, and that there will be no serious attack on Germany; yet others believe that the people of Great Britain and France as apart from the Governments do not want the war, and also that Great Britain and France are at variance over it.

The preconceptions of the Indian mind find another outlet in an unbounded belief in the effectiveness and prevalence of censorship. Whenever the published news about the war does not conform to or fall in with their preconceived notions, people here do not revise their theories but simply assume that the true facts are being withheld or suppressed. This was perhaps best seen when the Finns were successfully resisting the Russian invasion. This resistance seemed so incredible that two contradictory hypotheses were offered in its explanation. They were either that Finland had actually been overrun but the news was not being allowed to reach this country by the British censorship or that Russia was not making any war at all. How such wholesale suppression could be possible and how it was that even the German and the Russian broadcasts did not announce the conquest were questions which did not normally occur to an educated Indian. On the contrary, such wonderment was often supposed to indicate a pro-Ally frame of mind.

Irresponsibility

The emotional complex leading to the indulgence in these unrealities is a deep-seated affair, evolved through long years. It is the product of sentimental and intellectual cross currents not easy to disentangle without artificial simplification. Nevertheless, certain broad facts connected with it stand out clearly enough. It will do no harm to pass them in review if it is remembered that the ultimate predisposition is due, not to a single factor, but to the intermingling, even in the same individual, of all or many of them.

The very first reason for the peculiar predisposition of the Indian mind in regard to the war is that it is irresponsible. That is to say, an average Indian does not feel that for him any stakes are involved in this war or that there is any risk for him in holding one opinion in preference to another. This springs not only from remoteness but also from the fixed belief that Great Britain is not going to be defeated by Germany. The writer has still to meet an Indian, however uncompromising he may be in his dislike of the British connexion, who expects or even hopes that Great Britain and France will collapse before the German onslaught. This almost universal faith in the ultimate victory of the Allies has a characteristic effect on Indian opinion, which is best illustrated by the working of the extremist mind. If the extremist really believed that the British Empire was going to dissolve, with the inevitable consequences which he never disputes of a new foreign domination and internal anarchy for India, he would at once have brought his emotional reactions in line with the practical needs of the situation. But he does not fear that kind of outcome. On the contrary, he asserts that the talk about any real danger to Great Britain is a propagandist move designed to frighten Indians into co-operation with her. He bases his reactions on quite different calculations. According to him, the war will weaken Great Britain so far as to make her concede the demands of the Congress, but not so fatally that there will be any danger of an internal breakdown or transfer to a foreign Power. A queer belief anyway, but one whose bearing on unrestrained emotional satisfaction at Great Britain's troubles must be obvious.

The same faith makes the neutral section of Indian opinion more passively neutral and friendly opinion indifferent and easy-going. Even this last section of Indian opinion does not feel that matters have gone or are going to such lengths as to make it necessary for anyone to make a final choice or to be up and doing. The habit of taking things easily and also of taking the line of least resistance is far too confirmed in men for Indians to behave differently.

The second reason for the pro-German bias is that what pro-British feeling there is in India has been demoralised and discouraged by nationalist propaganda. The anti-British sentiment has a clear moral and sentimental appeal in the principle of nationalism. There is no corresponding moral conviction in favour of the British connexion based on the idea of international co-operation. Those who are for the British connexion cannot hold their heads high and say that they too stand for a principle and are every whit as patriotic and disinterested as the opponents of the British connexion. They have been made to yield moral ground till the only pleas left to them have been reduced to expediency and self interest. Consequently they are timid and defeatist. They are divided within themselves and are most anxious to keep both doors open.

Reticence as Weakness

The third reason is the incompatibility of the British method of propaganda and publicity with the Indian temperament. The average Indian has a weakness for rhetoric, high-pitched emotionalism, over-statement and flamboyancy. It does not matter much to him if today's boast turns into tomorrow's bluff, for the boast while it lasts is heartwarming. On the contrary, he looks upon understatement, reserve, and reticence as signs of weakness. For this reason the German propaganda has a much greater influence on him than the British. If the Germans sink anything, they sink whole fleets; they say that when they start bombing they will send three thousand aeroplanes and leave nothing unwrecked in Great Britain; they never admit losses. In contrast, the British publish their losses, making Indians believe that since so much is admitted the German version must be nearer the truth; they exhort their people to be prepared for the worst from the air, leading to the inference that the British people are cowering in fear of bombing by the Germans; they do not declare that they will be in Berlin, showing thereby that they never hope to get there. Indians are extremely sensitive to these different (albeit artificial) nuances of self-assurance. They find the Germans positive, and, as has already been stated, not being sufficiently interested in the war or sufficiently frightened by its prospective outcome, do not care to look beneath the surface.

Ignorance of Nazism

The fourth reason is lack of knowledge. Generally speaking even educated Indians are extremely ignorant about the things connected with wars. They feel no intellectual interest in the war, which could have furnished a corrective to their sentimental approach because they do not possess the necessary background of knowledge which alone can rouse curiosity about the war as an intrinsically interesting subject of inquiry. Even more important from its bearing on the formation of opinion is ignorance about Nazism as a social and political philosophy. It is generally assumed that Indians are hostile to Nazism. This is only superficially true, for what vocal opposition to Nazism makes itself manifest in India is largely a matter of conventional and academic gesture, lacking the true ring of conviction. It could hardly be otherwise, since very few Indians have studied and thought about Nazism deeply enough to realise what it stands for in personal life as well as in internal and international politics. Nazism is disliked in India not because it is Nazism, but because it used to be looked upon as the enemy of the new and fashionable love of the Indian intellectual—Communism. As apart from this, Indians hardly make any distinction between Nazism and other political philosophies. In fact, so far as the interests of Indian nationalism are concerned, most people are slapdash enough to leave it at this: that the British and the Nazis are all alike.

These are some of the more important factors influencing the shaping of Indian opinion on the war. There are besides others which contribute their share of complexity. And behind them all, there lie of course the broader political considerations arising out of the Indo-British relationship. It should be firmly realised that Indian opinion in regard to the war cannot be approached in isolation. Its day to day manifestations are mere symptoms which cannot be grappled with anywhere except at the source. War propaganda in India must therefore attend to fundamentals and reckon with the deeper psychological forces at work. By so doing not only will it ensure the success of its immediate objects, but perhaps also pave the way for a wider and more permanent reconciliation.

NEW FILMS FROM

MERTON PARK STUDIOS

A film of Britain's great Industrial War Machine . . .

BEHIND THE GUNS

The story of the National Register . . .

WITH ALL OUR MIGHT

The importance of scrap metal in war, stressed in . . .

FEED THE FURNACES

How Britain's food supplies are ensured . . .

BRINGING IT HOME

A film, for Local Authorities, on waste paper salvage . . .

RAW MATERIAL IS WAR MATERIAL

A film about the British Iron and Steel Industry . . .

FURNACES OF INDUSTRY

Stanley Holloway tells us about . . .

ALBERT'S SAVINGS

AND FOUR COMMERCIAL FILMS FOR LINTAS, IN TECHNICOLOR, STARRING

CLAPHAM & CLARK — **OLIVER WAKEFIELD**

REVNELL & WEST — **HERMIONE BADDELEY**

THE "UNUSUAL" FILM MOVEMENT

A Filmgoer Remembers

TO SEE good films in London today is simple: you go to the Odeon or the Empire or the Academy; the Polytechnic, the Paris, the Everyman, the Cinephone or Studio One; maybe to the Curzon or the Embassy. Few good foreign films fail to get to London.

Twenty years ago it was not so easy. Big American films had their premieres at West End theatres, at the Scala, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Palace or the London Pavilion. But Continental films, except for the spectacular Ufa product, crept in sideways, lay about in a Wardour Street vault, got maybe (after 1925) a Film Society showing.

The Davis brothers were really the first showmen to present Continental films of a "different" kind in London. They owned the Marble Arch Pavilion, then London's premier cinema, and showed *Caligari* in 1920 and followed it later by other famous Ufa films—*Metropolis* and *The Spy*. The Polytechnic, managed then, as now, by Mr Leslie, ran *Destiny* in 1924. *Anne Boleyn* (*Deception*) and *The Golem* got Scala showings and that was about all. But none of these cinemas adopted the policy of regularly running "different" Continental films.

If memory is reliable (curse the evacuation!), the first London cinema to announce a Continental policy was the Embassy nearby the Holborn Restaurant. It ran Grune's *The Street* and Volkoff's *Kean* before closing. That was 1924. Like the handsomely produced monthly, "The Silver Screen", the Embassy was before its time. No one else tried the experiment. Occasional Ufa pictures like *The Last Laugh*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Vaudeville* and *Berlin* went to the Capitol (now the Gaumont) or the New Gallery. *Siegfried* was given a spectacular setting at the Albert Hall, where Mr Cochran later presented *Faust* complete with Sir Landon Ronald and orchestra. London had no equivalent of the Paris "little cinemas", no Vieux Colombier, Studio des Ursulines, or Studio 28.

Again the story switches to the Davis brothers. Their theatres were now (1927) included in the Gaumont circuit, but the brothers retained the right to book pictures and act as managers. They owned, among others, the small Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion which showed pictures on their second London run. But it had become dwarfed by the big new theatres and second runs were being well looked after by the new suburban houses. Now part of a chain, it was an awkward house to book for. Thus when Stuart Davis went to Reginald Bromhead, managing director of the circuit, and suggested a new policy, Bromhead agreed. The new policy was to show Continental films, new and old, an idea which Stuart had seen working the year before at the Cameo in New York.

Davis was lucky. Wardour (now A.B.P.C.) had long had a Ufa contract and the newest German picture was *The Loves of Jeanne Ney* which the censor slashed and Wardour retitled *The Lusts of the Flesh*. Davis took over the Avenue Pavilion, hung out a banner inviting the Shaftesbury Avenue passers-by to see *The Lusts of the Flesh* but was shrewd enough to do dual publicity with Pabst's name and for his own new policy. "The Unusual Film Movement" and "The Home of International Film Art" had begun. Stuart did good business with two publics. The one that mattered to him was the "intelligent" audience which was growing as a result of the Film Society's private shows, the little highbrow paper "Close Up", the columns of one or two progressive film critics like C. A. Lejeune in the *Manchester Guardian* and later *The Observer*, and Walter Mycroft in the *Evening Standard*. Iris Barry's book *Let's Go to the Pictures* also probably helped.

Stuart got, kept and enlarged that audience in the two years he ran the Avenue Pavilion. He revived all the old German classics (not so old then), *Caligari*, *Last Laugh*, *The Street*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Warning Shadows*, *Student of Prague*, *Tartuffe*, *Two Brothers*, *Vaudeville*, *Faust*, *Danton* and the rest. He paid £200 to an ex-W and F salesman for a four weeks run of *Waxworks* and took £1,800. He revived the famous Hollywood classics, *Woman of Paris*, *Greed*, *Foolish Wives* and *He Who Gets Slapped*. He dug up the Swedish *Gosta Berling*, the Russian *Marriage of the Bear* and *The Postmaster*. He wrote intelligent hand-outs for the press. Above all he made his theatre a place where many people for the time saw The Film at its best. His tiny office became a meeting place for the most ardent film followers. Stuart himself was always the charming host.

After a while the film supply gave out so Stuart Davis went off to Paris. Here was a new field, the films of Clair, Cavalcanti, Feyder, Epstein, and the *avant-garde* shorts of Deslav, Lacombe, Man Ray and the others. He bought the English rights of the lot, started a French season with a white-tie opening and the French ambassador. He introduced London to *Finis Terrae*, *The Italian Straw Hat*, *Les Deux Timides*, *En Rade*, *Rien que les Heures*, *The Fall of the House of Usher* and many others. But his greatest success was with Feyder's *Thérèse Raquin*. Griffiths of First-National had a copy sent over from Germany, where it had been made with a Franco-German cast for quota requirements. He was about to send it back unbooked but happened to mention it to Stuart Davis who promptly booked it. Unluckily his press show coincided with an M.G.M. show. Only one critic turned up—Mycroft of the *Evening Standard*. He gave it the review it deserved. The rest of the press bombarded Stuart to see the film but he refused. Next day they lined up in the public queue. The film did big business, got many provincial bookings and certainly helped to get Feyder his M.G.M. contract in Hollywood.

Summer 1929 saw Stuart Davis's contract with Gaumont expire. The latter decided not to carry on the policy and, at Stuart's suggestion, opened the theatre as London's first newsreel cinema. Stuart Davis took over managing the Davis Theatre, Croydon, which he still does. It looked as if London would no longer have a "Home of International Film Art". But down the street was the Windmill Theatre which Elsie Cohen was managing as best as she could with second run pictures. Miss Cohen had for a long time been interested in the Continental film and had worked in Holland and Germany on production. Now at the Windmill she started an "unusual" film movement and was able to get several Soviet films past the censors, her biggest success being *Turksib*. This lasted until the autumn when the owner of the theatre discontinued films and Van Damm began his famous Revuedeville. Meanwhile a few of the old regulars at the Avenue Pavilion—among them Margery Locket, Paul Rotha, J. B. Holmes and F. Gordon Roe—started the Film Group. Davis gave them his mailing list. They circularised 2,500 people in London to see if they would support a successor to the Avenue Pavilion. Eighty per cent said they would. But no suitable theatre could be found except the Academy, run by Eric Hakim, who used to be a violinist in the Davis theatres. Stuart himself had tried Hakim with the idea but Hakim wanted too big a rent. A week or two later he let Elsie Cohen take over the house and announced a "new" policy of Continental films, old and new. Hakim himself had little faith in the project and thought Miss Cohen crazy when she opened with Dovjenko's *Earth*. But what could not be foreseen was the talking film. When it did come, it was generally predicted that the French and German film would disappear from London. Yet next April, the Academy will celebrate a decade of its policy for Continental films.

The story of London's reception of the Continental talking film is the story of our next month's article in this series on the Specialist Theatre Movement.

FILM SOCIETY NEWS

SCOTTISH AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL

A Report by Norman Wilson

IT WAS courageous of the Scottish Film Council to hold the seventh Scottish Amateur Film Festival when almost all similar efforts had been abandoned because of the war. It was rewarded by 54 entries, only 10 less than last year's total, and the winners were shown in Glasgow on April 27.

Forsyth Hardy speaking for the adjudicators (the others were Oliver Bell, William Jeffrey and C. A Oakley) said: "Although the amateur in war-time is working under certain limitations, there are decided opportunities. We are living in a changing world, and in the first days of the war there was a great dramatic subject available to the amateur—evacuation. There was, however, no film on this subject entered in the festival, and the adjudicators were rather surprised and a little disappointed. One film was entered on A.R.P. and that was going in the right direction.

"Non-fiction films were increasing in number as well as improving in quality, while fiction films were steadily improving in quality. The non-fiction film continued to be the main field of activity for the amateur."

One of the main criticisms the adjudicators made was of the hackneyed nature of the subjects chosen by the amateur. Suggestions for future consideration included films on the smoke menace of Edinburgh, the expansion of Glasgow, the Border Festivals, mountaineering in the Highlands, the work of the Scottish lighthouses, life in the smaller Western isles, and film surveys of towns of character and tradition such as St. Andrews and Perth.

The outstanding feature of the Festival was that no less than half the number of entries was in colour—rich, well-balanced colour which, in many cases (notably in Mathew L. Nathan's *Copenhagen*), was infinitely superior to results seen on the professional screen. There was, however, no attempt to use colour either imaginatively or selectively, but now that amateurs have gained confidence in the medium it is to be hoped that they will experiment on more creative lines.

The British Film Institute Cup for colour rightly went to Mathew L. Nathan's *Copenhagen*, a competent if superficial survey of the Danish capital. The Victor Saville Trophy for non-fiction films was awarded to Dr J. Evans Gordon's *Fishing Fleet*, almost a model film of a type of subject well within the scope of the amateur. Well-constructed and well observed, it shows the value of thoughtful preparation and careful scripting. *Handba' at Kirkwall*, which secured the Andrew Buchanan Cup for the Craft Studio, Edinburgh, is a neat example of what the amateur can do in recording local customs. In the fiction class the Alfred Hitchcock Cup went to Joseph Bowyer's *Two Hours to Wait*, a tidy and amusing little film showing how different passengers spend their time at a wayside junction. Placing no great strain on the actors, because the situations were obvious and naturally comic, this was another example of a satisfying if modest success as the result of keeping within the resources of the material and apparatus available to the producer.

The impression gained from the films shown at the final adjudication was that amateurs are steadily improving in technical efficiency but, in general, still show a lack of creative imagination. *Stepping Stones Between America and Europe*, *Black Vomit*, *The Story of Smoke*, *A.R.P.*, *Our Daily Bread*, *Midhowe Broch*, the titles of some of the films which, for various reasons, did not secure awards, are nevertheless a heartening indication that amateurs are turning in increasing numbers to subjects of contemporary and documentary importance.

PROGRAMME BUILDING

FILM SOCIETIES owe their existence to groups of men and women who translate the unspoken need for study and discussion of the culture of cinema into practical action. The very basis of their success must be in their presentation to their members of fresh and unorthodox material not seeable in the local cinema. They can, in fact, afford to experiment, whereas the exhibitor dare not.

Film Society Committees must therefore make themselves fully aware of what film material is available. At the present juncture most established societies, which have been busily collecting data for years, can locate almost every film in the country, and can estimate the value of each one either from reviews, or by contact with persons at centre. A good local reference library often proves the saving of a harassed programme builder; and the recent publications of the British Film Institute (e.g. Arthur Vesselo's monumental catalogue, reviewed in DNL January) represent a great advance in information services. New societies, moreover, can always count on any amount of co-operation from older and more established societies.

Once all sources of information have been properly tapped, the programme builder will find a wide choice of subjects. Films of sociological or psychological value, continental films of outstanding merit, fantasies, satires; surrealist, abstract, cartoon, puppet, and silhouette films; documentaries; experimental films involving new applications in colour or sound technique; and certain outstanding scientific, biological, economic and diagrammatic films.

Local conditions are bound to play some part in determining the choice of programmes, but the object of any real Film Society should be to establish itself as a permanent cultural institution, and not just a preliminary to a repertory cinema. Contrast, cultural value, an international flavour, and unusual character can be guaranteed to make a programme pleasing to any Film Society audience; but there are possibilities beyond the mere "balanced" programme consisting of a cartoon, a documentary, an experimental colour abstract, and a French feature film. It should be possible to construct programmes round a definite theme, putting together a set of varying films for contrast or comparison. The most electrifying example of this was the Film Society's show in London two years ago, when two films about the Abyssinian war were run alternately, reel by reel; one was Russian, and the other Italian.

Once this question of constructing programmes has sunk in, there are plenty of ideas which will spring to the mind of the programme builder. Programmes contrasting directorial methods (e.g. the Austrian and American versions of *Maskerade*); programmes showing the development of a director (e.g. Pudovkin or Hitchcock films over a period of years); programmes showing differences of treatment (e.g. Dreyer's *Joan of Arc* run with *Mädchen Joanna*). Programmes of more esoteric contrasts are often exceptionally popular —e.g. Vigo's *Atalante* run with a Marx Brothers film, or Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* run with Benoit Levy's *La Maternelle*.

A few final notes of warning. Don't show English or American features unless you revive them for special purposes. Don't show continental features with a lot of dialogue and no English sub-titles. Don't forget to get on the right side of local authorities; if you are running a programme at short notice it is usually best to run films which have at least an "A" certificate. Don't miscalculate running times when you are booking your films; all good catalogues give you at least the number of reels, but remember that without exact footage the reels may lead you astray as much as 15 minutes on a feature. And finally, don't be discouraged if your members complain about all your programmes and local authorities regard you with deep suspicion. All Film Societies have to go through it; and the better the programmes—in the sociological and cultural sense —the sooner they will be accepted by authorities and citizens alike.

THREE NEW FRENCH FILMS

Ils Etaient Neuf Célibataires. *Director:* Sacha Guitry. *Actors:* Sacha Guitry, Elvire Popesco, Betty Stockfeld. *Distributors:* Unity Films.

GUITRY again. Guitry's wit to charm those who like it, Guitry's self-assurance to put it over to those who don't. And Guitry's shameless exploitation of the cinema for his own ends. It seems he is trying to goebbelize his public by a succession of *faits accomplis* into booking for him in the French film *Valhalla* a seat on the right hand of Duvivier. It seems rather churlish to say he really doesn't deserve it, after all he's done. But he doesn't. His art has almost nothing to do with the cinema. He uses the film like a visual gramophone record, merely as a means of widening his public. And because the film just won't stand for that sort of thing, there is always a certain awkwardness about Guitry's films. They look rather as if they were photographed on an emulsion of grease-paint, and spliced together with spirit-gum. This one is no exception, but it is none the less delightful. The gist of the story is that Guitry gathers nine heads of aged bachelors together in a hostel with the object of marrying them off to foreign women who want to acquire French nationality. He gets his rake-off, and also in the end Elvire Popesco, which makes it worth his while. The herd of bachelors is rather too large to be manageable. Two drop out half way through, and it would have helped the film for two more to have gone with them, leaving more time to expand on the remainder. Or perhaps it would have been better if Guitry had played all nine himself. He's quite capable of it.

La Marseillaise. *Director:* Jean Renoir. *Actors:* Pierre Renoir, Louis Jouvet. *Distributors:* Unity Films.

AFTER so many films about the French Revolution made by people who think the *sans-culottes* went around with their pants off—after all, aren't all revolutionaries morally depraved?—this Popular Front act of faith has a very genuine air. At least one can feel that La Révolution might have been like this. For one thing it is not oversimplified. It doesn't blow up to full intensity overnight, with hordes of ragged extras carrying property billhooks thronging through the streets of quaint old Paris. It develops much more gradually and uncertainly, directed first against the corrupt and traitorous nobility—the fifth column who are hampering France in her fight against the invader. But the thing has started, and there's no stopping it. Through his weakness and vacillation the king, excellently played by Pierre Renoir, is dragged in. But even then the revolutionaries are very careful to treat him with fairness and respect. They only ask that he shall be responsible to the National Assembly. The film ends before the tumbril and knitting-woman stage has been reached. The only aristocrats executed are those who have fired in cold blood on the people. Because the co-operative unit which made the picture could not afford to build grandiose sets, most of the action takes place in genuine surroundings, which give an atmosphere that all the Metro millions could not buy. It is a film which deserves more than the faint praise which the critics have given it.

Le Dernier Tournant. *Director:* Pierre Chenal. *Actors:* Fernand Gravet, Michel Simon, Corinne Luchaire.

THIS film also gains immeasurably from the fact that natural settings have been used as much as possible. The Californian filling station of "The Postman Always Knocks Twice" has been translated into French and perched on a bend of one of those roads which wind steeply up from the coast into the hinterland of the Alpes Maritimes. It's all there in the flesh, so to speak, no back-projection, and most of the light supplied by the Mediterranean sun. The fullest use has been made of what the credit title calls the *camion sonore*, so that the dialogue scenes have the same natural quality as the rest. The story is basically the same as that of "The Postman", but the characters are not Mr Cain's characters, not by a long chalk. They are much more concerned with sentiment, and the human implications of their actions. They even take the trouble to explain their motives to each other. Perhaps violent action, if speechless, just looks dumb to a Frenchman. Whatever the reason, the film benefits from it. All the acting is well up to standard, with Michel Simon a head or so in front of the rest.

HAVE YOU READ

"The Dunciad"

and the other features in

SIGHT AND SOUND?

Published by the British Film Institute at

4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET LONDON WC1

CINEMATOGRAPHY IS A PRODUCT OF APPLIED SCIENCE

The position of the working scientist, the organisation and application of scientific research, the place of science in modern civilisation, questions of scientific education and popularisation, are discussed in

THE SCIENTIFIC WORKER

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS

This paper discusses such questions in a non-technical way from the point of view of the scientist himself.

Monthly, price 3d. **Annual Subscription 4s.**

PUBLISHED BY THE A.S.W.,
30 BEDFORD ROW, W.C.1

NEWS THEATRES IN WAR-TIME

By CORRY W. FENNELL

WITH BRITAIN at war News Theatre service will develop in technique and grow in utility. The service of information and entertainment given by the news theatres, rapidly developed during the last years of uneasy peace, can go forward in time of war. News, news documents and good short pictures are available. These are the essential supplies for the maintenance of the service. The function of the news theatres in peace or war is to present them in well balanced programmes and under good conditions.

Under war conditions, and war conditions only, news is of necessity censored in the interests of the State—censorship by omission. Providing the import or meaning of news is not changed, this will not affect the utility of the service offered, nor will the public be betrayed.

The development of the news theatres has been the outcome of public demand. Its power of service and influence for good or bad is immeasurably greater than if the development had been the result of created demand. Some news theatres are inclined to specialise in the presentation of news in a serious setting, others lean towards a light background, but in either form it can be truly said that an influential public is served, a public interested in affairs.

The service that can be offered by the news theatre, having in mind the good short pictures that are available today, is as good as the news—and by "as good as the news" I do not mean as pleasant as the news. The British public want strong news. Coronations, jubilees and boat races are grand things for packing the theatres, but experience has shown that whilst the extra visitors who come to see these things are welcome guests, and frequently become the most ardent salesmen and saleswomen in our favour, their visits are annual or bi-annual at the most. The regular visitor comes for a service of actualities, pleasant or unpleasant, presented in a setting of good short pictures. To these basic facts the war has made no difference at all.

In time of war, people are still more appreciative of the real contact with affairs that the news theatres offer them. Those responsible for running the theatres have definite proof of this. The public also appreciate the great work that is being put into many of the short pictures that are now becoming available..

We know from experience that the life, extension and continuing improvement in service that the news theatres offer depend upon the regular visitor. A more demoralising reason for existence was never worked out than that news theatres were planned for "the man with an hour to spare". For those seeking evidence in support of the time-wasting idea there is, it is true, an occasional small theatre to be found running short programmes, featuring news supported by old pictures of little entertainment or other value.

Some of the best news films are being produced in the form of news documents, and some of the best short pictures are being made in documentary form. The difference between a news document and a documentary short picture of general interest is that the "high spot" of the former must consist of authentic records of immediate news value, whilst the "high spot" of the latter may be past events—but they must still be of current interest.

There is still one more type of documentary film—the film made to show existing effort, existing organisations and existing conditions of life. These films may be brilliant in conception and production, and more important, they may be exactly what is wanted by the public, but unless they are released without delay and plans are made for immediate showing, there is the almost certain risk that they will be outdated, uninteresting, and likely to recoil upon the producers.

Whilst it is vital that news film, documentaries and short pictures in general should cover the war and war problems in full, it is absolutely essential that news apart from war should be made the very most of. Purely entertainment films too must receive full measure of attention.

The most notable advance in news theatre technique since the beginning of the war is the addition to programmes of the French Official War News. *Journal de Guerre* is documentary news in form—a detailed and intense study of life and action on the land and sea fronts of France. The public want this.

News theatres are anxiously awaiting the next and obvious opportunity to move forward—the public are wanting pictures about the British Army, Navy and Air Force—and about Britain's war effort. New pictures only are wanted—old ones are useless.

DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR JUNE

(The following bookings for June are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News and Specialised Theatres Association.)

African Skyways	
News Theatre, Leeds	17th–22nd
Tatler, Chester	24th–29th
All Hands (Anti-gossip Film)	
Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly, London	3rd– 5th
Waterloo News Theatre, London	6th– 9th
World's News Theatre, London	13th–16th
News Theatre, Bristol	17th–22nd
Classic, Croydon	23rd–26th
Embassy, Notting Hill Gate, London	23rd–26th
Classic, Hammersmith, London	24th–26th
Animal Geography	
Tatler, Manchester	24th–29th
Birth of the Year	
Classic, Tooting, London	16th–19th
Britain's Life Line	
Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	3rd– 8th
Dangerous Comment (Anti-gossip Film)	
Waterloo News Theatre, London	13th–16th
News Theatre, Birmingham	17th–22nd
Victoria News Theatre, London	20th–22nd
Fingers and Thumbs	
Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	24th–29th
Classic, Croydon	27th–29th
Fitness Wins: No. 1	
News Theatre, Leeds	17th–22nd
Tatler, Manchester	17th–22nd
Gullible Gull	
Tatler, Chester	3rd– 8th
Housepainter	
Waterloo News Theatre, London	6th– 9th
Inside Goods	
Classic, Baker Street, London	9th–12th
March of Time: No. 11	
Classic, Tooting, London	2nd– 5th
Classic, Croydon	13th–16th
Classic, Southampton	16th–20th
World's New Theatre, London	20th–24th
March of Time: No. 12	
Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	15th–20th
Classic, Baker Street, London	27th–30th
Vogue, Mile End, London	27th–30th
March of Time: No. 13	
Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	17th–22nd
Tatler, Manchester	24th–29th
The News House, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th–29th
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	17th–22nd
March of Time: No. 1 (Sixth year)	
Victoria News Theatre, London	10th–17th
Waterloo News Theatre, London	10th–17th
Eros, Piccadilly, London	10th–17th
Classic, Baker Street, London	13th–15th
North Sea	
Classic, Hammersmith, London	9th–12th
Now You're Talking (Anti-gossip Film)	
News Theatre, Birmingham	3rd– 8th
News Theatre, Bristol	3rd– 8th
Victoria News Theatre, London	6th– 8th
World's News Theatre, London	20th–23rd
Our Fighting Navy	
Waterloo News Theatre, London	20th–23rd
Classic, Tooting, London	20th–23rd
Point of View No. 3	
Classic, Hendon, London	3rd– 6th
Point of View No. 6	
Classic, Southampton	6th– 8th
Classic, Croydon	6th– 8th
Point of View No. 7	
News Theatre, Leeds	24th–29th
The News House, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th–29th
Point of View No. 5	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	10th–15th
Reporter in Soho	
Victoria News Theatre, London	17th–19th
Ring of Steel	
Classic, Croydon	9th–12th
The News House, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th–22nd
Shadow in the Stream	
Tatler, Chester	10th–15th
The City	
News Theatre, Leeds	10th–15th
The Islanders	
News Theatre, Leeds	24th–29th
These Children are Safe	
Tatler, Chester	10th–15th
The Sea Breaks Through	
Vogue, Tooting, London	13th–15th

BRITISH DOCUMENTARY ACTIVITY

THE G.P.O. FILM UNIT, now officially a part of the Ministry of Information, has followed up its *Squadron* 992 (which still has not been seen by the public; why not?) with Jennings' agriculture film *Spring Offensive*. David Macdonald's lightships film is being cut and Holmes is back from the Mediterranean with material for his Merchant Service film. Cavalcanti, as noted elsewhere in this issue, is loaned to the Ealing Studios for a story-film.

G.B. Instructional reports that Mary Field's *Civilian Front* has been delivered to the Ministry and their economics film is reviewed elsewhere. Leon Schauder, the young South African now under Bruce Woolfe's wing, has finished cutting Leacock's two non-theatrical films for the International Wool Secretariat and has begun films on Ports and on Shipbuilding, both officially sponsored films. The all-diagram film *Empire Round the Atlantic* for the British Council is almost ready.

At Realist Film Unit, John Taylor is preparing to make a Railways in Wartime film with Arthur Elton producing, Ruby Grierson is scripting a number of food films for the British Commercial Gas Association under Film Centre's supervision, and Rotha has now a show-copy of *The Fourth Estate*.

Final work is being done on the Film Centre report for P.E.P. and dealing with the impact of the war on British democracy. The four scenarios—Public Opinion, Evacuation, Food, and Leisure—are finished.

J. D. Davidson (having finished his seven-reel technical oil film) and Ralph Bond are working with Strand Films, the former to make a Bren Gun film under Elton's supervision, the latter to make *Overground Underground*, a transport film. Ellitt has been shooting for *Fitness* which will have a commentary by C. B. Fry.

The Shell Film Unit reports much activity. *Cinemagazine No.* 5 is complete, as is a hospitals film. Spanish and Portugese versions of eleven films are being finished by Geoffrey Bell, and Baylis is making a tractor film with Edgar Anstey producing.

March of Time's B.E.F. Unit is back from France and is shooting training sequences in England. Another of its units is getting material here for an item on the American Press and its foreign correspondents in France and Britain. Slocombe, who shot material for Kline in Poland, was in Holland for *March of Time*, but escaped the Nazis.

Three new *Points of View: Why Work Anyway?*, *Man or Machine*, and *What is Federation?*—are ready for trade show by Spectator Short Films under Ivan Scott's direction. He asks it to be put on record that he is a Scotsman and not a "young Londoner" as frequently stated.

BOOK REVIEWS

Shooting Without Stars. Clifford Hornby. *Hutchinson.* 16*s.* Illustrated.

MR HORNBY is a cameraman whose job has taken him to India, Africa and Iran. This book is concerned with his experiences on his travels, eked out with a chapter on his apprenticeship to the film industry, and another on location-shooting in England. It is for the most part a pleasantly written string of anecdotes about the amusing things which happen from time to time on production, the things which become part of the folk-lore of studio canteen gossip; how a revolving turntable made Madeleine Carroll sick; how, in a battle scene, a soldier got bayonetted in mistake for a dummy; and about the time Wally Basco was gaoled as a soldier of the Red Army by the Latvian police. It must be said that some of these stories have a greater significance for Mr Hornby himself than they have for the general public, but others are worth telling anywhere. From time to time the book gets completely away from movie-making, and it is only then that Mr Hornby's well-developed powers of observation are able to have full play. On these occasions he shows a real capacity for describing vividly and with sensibility the life and scenery of the countries he visits. For these passages alone the book is worth reading.

Roads to Citizenship: Issued under the auspices of the Association for Education in Citizenship. *Oxford University Press.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

A STIMULATING booklet on various methods of *informal* education in citizenship. The methods discussed include study circles, debates, commissions, B.B.C. talks, and newspaper analyses: regional surveys and "projects", civic weeks and exhibitions, films and drama.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR: In the May issue of the DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER you ask a few questions in regard to *Squadron* 992 which is a Ministry of Information short, and, whilst I am unable to answer your questions, I do, as an exhibitor, ask some of my own, which I hope you will be able to answer for me.

One short, which has received very excellent reports, not only as entertainment, but on its value as prestige and propaganda, I regret to say has not been offered to me for exhibition in any of my cinemas.

In regard to other shorts of this class, I wrote to the renting organisation handling them on the 9th April last, and received a reply dated the 11th April informing me that arrangements for the release dates were then being discussed and that as soon as they were definitely fixed I should be informed. A few days ago, a month after my application to show the films, I am now able to book them.

Whilst I cannot speak for the exhibiting trade as a whole, I would like you to know that as an exhibitor, I feel it is my duty to put any and all of these subjects on my screen. They are being made with a sound object, and whether they turn out good or bad, or whether their cost of production is criticised, it does not alter the object for which they were made which is to show them to the public, and therefore I consider it my duty in serving the public to show them at the earliest opportunity.

F. W. ALLWOOD

London and Provincial Cinemas Ltd.,
150 *Southampton Row, W.C.*1.

A DECADE IN THE SERVICE OF DOCUMENTARY

AND—AS EVER—ALWAYS READY TO CARRY OUT COMPETENTLY, EXPEDITIOUSLY AND OBLIGINGLY EVERY REQUIREMENT THAT CAN BE USEFULLY PROVIDED BY A MODERN LABORATORY

PREVIEW THEATRE (R.C.A.) AND PRIVATE CUTTING ROOMS

TELEPHONE: 1366 GERRARD

STUDIO FILM LABORATORIES LTD

80-82 WARDOUR STREET & 71 DEAN STREET, LONDON, W.1

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made. F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up, choice of films, to prospective users.

Austin Film Library, Longbridge, Birmingham. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical & travel. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound & silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (*a*) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary & other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (*b*) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films and sources. (*c*) *Early Films*. Films 1896–1934 still available in Britain.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal & miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional & economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Educational General Services, Little Holt, Merton Lane, Highgate, N.6. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available only through members of the Association. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Empire Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Films primarily of Empire interest. With a useful subject index. 16 mm. & a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Ensign Film Library, 88–89 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Wide selection of all types of films including fiction, comedies, documentaries, films of geography, animal life, industry. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. & a few Sd. H.

Film Centre, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Kodak, Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. (*a*) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (*b*) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *New Schools for Old*, *America Thinks it Over*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding & surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical & educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American & German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Twenty technical & documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, 104 High Holborn, W.C.1. Films of religious & temperance appeal, also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 10 Park Place, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work* & Pollard's *Dragon of Wales*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Southern Railway, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), & films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Strand Film Company, 5A Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2. Eleven films available for non-theatrical distribution including *Aerial Milestones*, *Chapter and Verse*, *Give the Kids a Break*, & a number of others of Empire & general interest, including 3 silent Airways films. Mostly 35 mm. Sd. A few 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, & some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German & Russian features & shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films & wide selection of early American & English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, 145 Wardour Street, W.1. Films of democratic & co-operative interest. Notes & suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

CATALOGUE OF THE MONTH

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Silent 16 mm. Films.

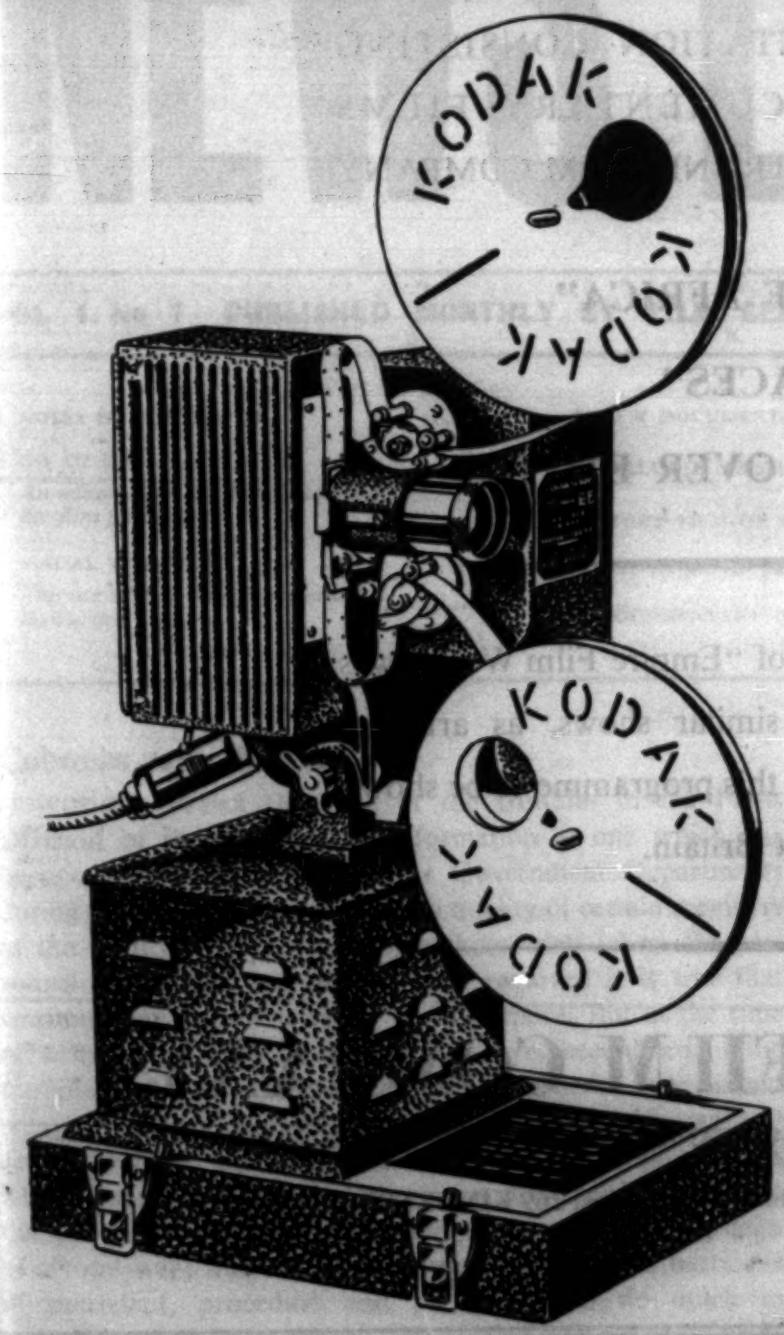
DO YOU remember Leatrice Joy, Reginald Denny, Laura La Plante, Lloyd Hamilton, Sue Carol, William Boyd? Do you remember when one used sometimes to go to the pictures, not for the star or for the picture itself, but because of the sub-title writer? George Marion and Herman Mankiwiez (if that is how his name was spelt) were box-office draws in their own right. Do you remember the orchestral effects? Half coconuts for galloping horses, hand rattles for machine guns, and a special machine to make the noise of aeroplane engines. If so, the Wallace Heaton catalogue is for you, for it is the only catalogue which lists a really wide selection of American, Russian and British silent feature films of the twenties. Here you will find (and revel in, I hope) *The Rose of Paris* (Mary Philbin), *Skinner's Dress Suit* and *California Straight Ahead* (Reginald Denny and Laura La Plante), *The Goose Woman* (Louise Dresser), *The Texas Streak* (Hoot Gibson), *Square Deal Sanderson* (Bill Hart), and *The Marriage Cheat* (Leatrice Joy and Adolphe Menjou). For these we can forgive the inclusion of *The Vortex*, *The Light Woman*, and a few other films better forgotten. And why is Larry Semon's name and a description omitted from *The Wizard of Oz*, Larry Semon's greatest comedy, and his only feature film?

Besides the Americans, the catalogue lists *The General Line*, *Mother*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Waxworks*, *Warning Shadows* and *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*. Nor are comedies forgotten. Do you remember Dorothy de Vor, woman slap-stick cum acrobatic star? Her *Navy Blues* is listed along with Chaplins, Lloyd Hamiltons, Larry Semons, Hardys (with Bobby Vernon and not Laurel), Harold Lloyds (particularly *Safety Last*), and Buster Keatons. Finally, the cartoons should not be overlooked, Felixs, early Mickeys and Mutt and Jeff.

This catalogue is as necessary to the film historian as to the seeker after memories. Now that old films are nearly as rare as Egyptian papyri, the Heaton collection must be the only source of many of them, for it covers different ground from that covered by the Film Institute.

"KODASCOPE" EE (A.C. EDUCATIONAL MODEL)

scores full marks for 16 mm. classroom projection



ECONOMY Low cost of machine due to efficient up-to-date design and elimination of redundant parts. Low running costs result of 300-watt lamp, advanced optical system, wide aperture lens (2" *f*1.6), which combine to give brighter screen picture than is common with lamps of higher consumption. The lamp is *not* over-run.

Lamp can be switched off during rewinding.

SIMPLICITY "Kodascope" is easy to thread up and handle. Controls reduced to a minimum. Torpedo spindle-ends simplify fitting of reels. Power rewind controlled by single movement. Optical framing device avoids necessity for re-adjusting projection angle after framing. Carrying case serves as firm projection stand. Built-in transformer enables "Kodascope" to be operated from any normal A.C. electricity supply. from 100-250 volts.

Price, including accessories, £30 Particulars of special discounts granted to educational authorities on request.

"Kodascopes" for D.C. circuits also available.

The Booklet
"Motion Pictures in Education"

This handsome 40-page illustrated brochure gives practical advice on the use of the film in the classroom, and includes details of Kodak 16 mm. cameras and projectors suitable for educational use. There is a section on producing cine films at school, by a headmaster who has made a special study of this work, and an appendix on 'still' photography in education.

A list contains 700 specially selected films of educational value which can be hired and/or bought outright. Both booklets free on request.

Write to

KODAK LTD.
(EDUCATIONAL DEPT. D.N.)
WEALDSTONE . HARROW . MIDDLESEX

AN EXAMPLE OF PLANNED PROPAGANDA

EMPIRE FILM WEEK

THE TATLER THEATRE

CHARING CROSS ROAD

MAY 19th——MAY 25th

A TOPICAL PRESENTATION CONSISTING
ENTIRELY OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS
PRODUCED BY THE STRAND FILM COMPANY

"MEN OF AFRICA"

"FIVE FACES"

"WINGS OVER EMPIRE"

The London presentation of "Empire Film Week" was the forerunner of many similar shows, as arrangements have been made for this programme to be shown at cinemas all over Great Britain.

THE STRAND FILM COMPANY

DONALD TAYLOR, *Managing Director.* ALEXANDER SHAW, *Director of Productions*

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2. Merton Park Studios: 269 KINGSTON ROAD, S.W.19

Owned and published by Film Centre Ltd., 34 Soho Square, London, W.1, and printed by Simson Shand Ltd., The Shenval Press, London and Hertford